



No. 98 Rs. 3.50

PUNDALIK

AND SAKHU



TWO FAMOUS SAINTS OF MAHARASHTRA

Prabhakar
Chavalkar

Twice a year on the Ekadashis of the months of Ashadh (around August) and Kartik (around April), pilgrims from far and near come to Pandharpur, a famous pilgrim centre in Maharashtra, known for its Vithoba temple. These pilgrims are called 'Varkaris' and their pilgrimage —a 'Var'.

The deity of the temple, Vithoba, also called Vithal or *Panduranga* by his devotees at Pandharpur, is none other than Shri Vishnu or Krishna.

Pundalik was the man who caused Sri Vishnu to stay at Pandharpur. People are so grateful to Pundalik that they visit his Samadhi (which is about a furlong away from the temple), before they seek the blessings of Vithal.

Saint Sakhu was a great devotee of Panduranga and is a well-known saint of Maharashtra.

It is believed that she was staying in Karhad near the confluence of the rivers, Krishna and Koyna, where stands to this day a built-up embankment named after her.. She probably lived during the time of the first Peshwa of the Marathas.

Her silent suffering and her unflinching devotion for Panduranga have endeared her to every Maharashtra.

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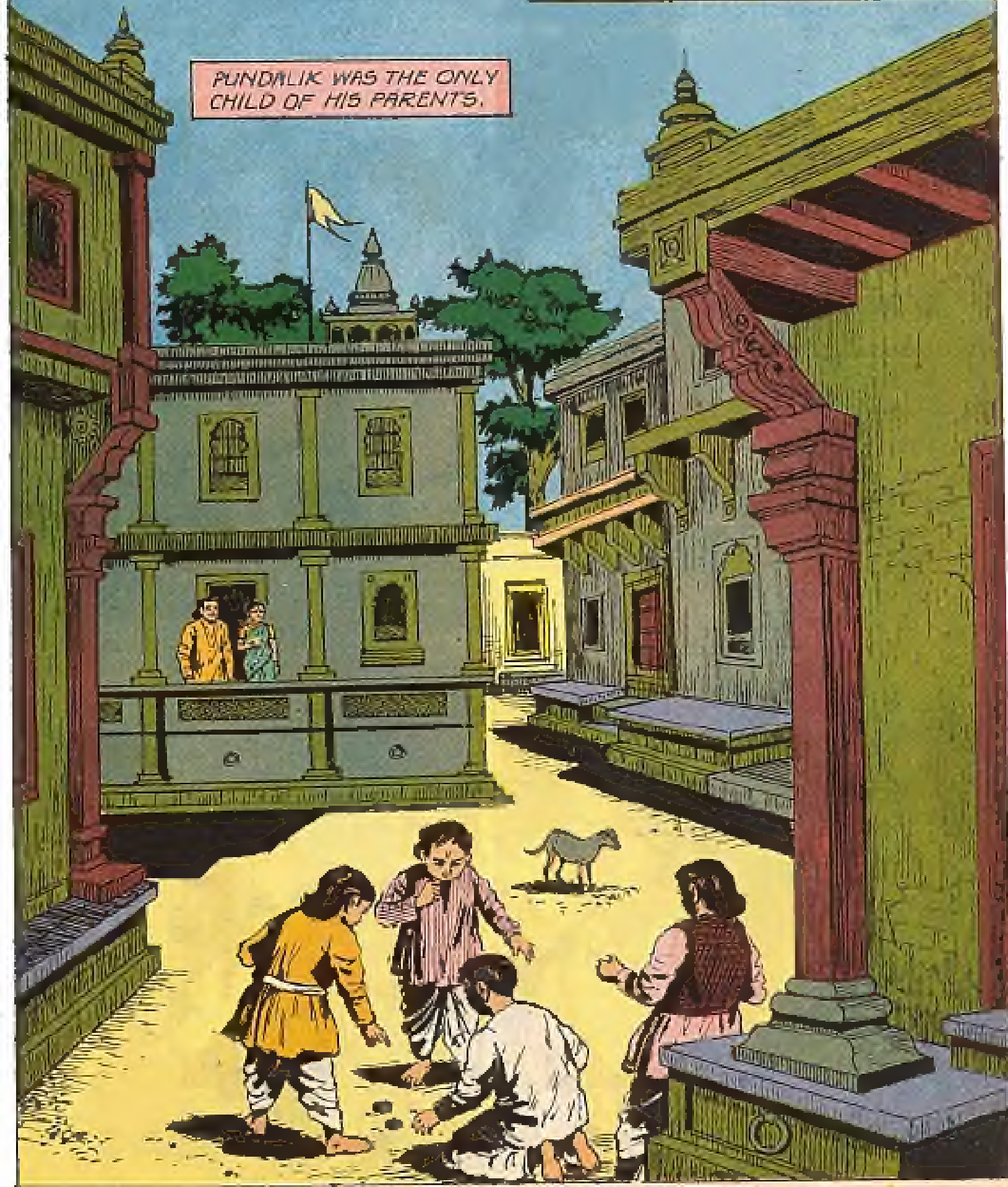
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PUNDALIK

PUNDALIK WAS THE ONLY
CHILD OF HIS PARENTS.



HE WAS BROUGHT UP WITH GREAT LOVE AND AFFECTION. BUT AS HE GREW OLDER, HE FELL INTO BAD COMPANY.

ALAS, WE BELIEVED THAT OUR SON WOULD TAKE CARE OF US IN OUR OLD AGE. BUT HE DOESN'T EVEN SPEAK POLITELY TO US.



HE SPENT ALL HIS TIME GAMBLING.

OH NO! I'VE LOST AGAIN! I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY WITH ME NOW.

I'LL LEND YOU SOME.



HE WAS FOND OF HIS WORTHLESS FRIENDS.

LET'S BE MERRY. LIFE IS FULL OF FUN.

YES, MY FRIEND. LIVE FOR TODAY. WHY THINK OF TOMORROW?



HE WAS HEARTLESS AND MEAN TO THOSE AT HOME.

PUNDALIK, YOU HAVE SPENT ALL THE MONEY THAT WE HAD. PLEASE COME TO YOUR SENSES, MY SON.

DON'T YOU DARE TELL ME WHAT TO DO! IF YOU DON'T HAVE MONEY, GIVE ME YOUR GOLD!



WITH ALL THEIR WEALTH GONE, HIS POOR MOTHER HAD TO RESORT TO BEGGING.

PLEASE LEND ME A LITTLE RICE. I WILL RETURN IT TO YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.

TAYI, TAKE THIS RICE. I AM GLAD TO HELP YOU.

POOR LADY, HOW SHE MUST SUFFER.

THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SON IS MAKING LIFE MISERABLE FOR THEM.

I CANNOT LIVE SUCH A LIFE ANY LONGER. IT IS BETTER TO DIE THAN TO HAVE TO BEG FOR A LIVING.

YES, MY DEAR. WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE. MY PATIENCE TOO IS AT AN END. PUNDALIK WILL NEVER REFORM. WE WILL GO AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE TO KASHI.

SO, THE NEXT DAY, WHEN PUNDALIK WAS AWAY WITH HIS FRIENDS -

MOTHER, LET ME COME WITH YOU.

NO, MY CHILD. YOUR PLACE IS BY YOUR HUSBAND. SERVE HIM WELL. MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

A LITTLE LATER, PUNDALIK RETURNED HOME.

WHERE IS MOTHER?

THEY HAVE
GONE ON A
PILGRIMAGE
TO KASHI.

WELL, LET THEM
GO. I AM HUNGRY.
GIVE ME SOME-
THING TO EAT.

THERE IS NOT A
SINGLE MORSEL
OF FOOD IN
THE HOUSE.

THEN GO AND
BORROW SOME
FROM THE
NEIGHBOURS.

I TRIED, BUT THEY
REFUSE. THEY
LOVED YOUR
PARENTS. NOW THAT
THEY ARE GONE,
NOBODY WANTS TO
HELP US.

PUNDALIK WAS NOT IN THE LEAST PERTURBED, HE WENT TO THE MONEYLENDER. BUT—

BEGONE. I SHALL NO
LONGER LEND YOU
ANY MONEY. YOUR
PARENTS HAVE LEFT,
WHO WILL REPAY
THE LOANS?

EVEN HIS FRIENDS AVOIDED HIM,
NOW THAT HE HAD NO MONEY.

I AM SORRY,
PUNDALIK, I MYSELF
AM IN NEED
OF MONEY.

WE'D BETTER
GO AWAY BEFORE
HE ASKS US!

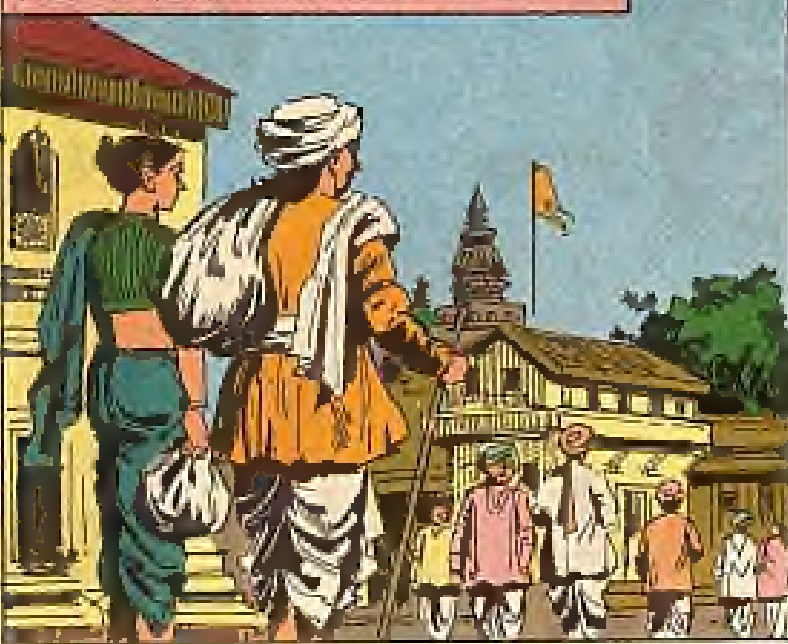
AT LAST, PUNDALIK REALISED THE TRUTH.

WHAT HAVE I DONE! MY PARENTS
WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO
REALLY CARED FOR
ME. AND I HAVE
DRIVEN THEM
AWAY!

I AM A SINNER.
I BROUGHT NOTHING
BUT MISERY TO
MY PARENTS.
WILL GOD EVER
FORGIVE ME?

I TOO WILL GO TO KASHI
AND PURIFY MYSELF
IN THE SACRED GANGA.
THEN I WILL REFORM
MYSELF. I WILL
STOP GAMBLING
AND START
WORKING.

THE NEXT DAY, PUNDALIK LEFT FOR KASHI WITH HIS WIFE.



THEY HAD TO CROSS A DENSE FOREST.



I AM TIRED AND HUNGRY. I CANNOT WALK ANY FURTHER.



LET US REST HERE TONIGHT. I WILL GO AND BRING YOU SOME FRUITS AND BERRIES.

AFTER HAVING EATEN THE FRUITS AND BERRIES, PUNDALIK'S WIFE DROPPED OFF TO SLEEP, WHILE HE KEPT GUARD.



SUDDENLY—

WHAT'S THAT?
I THINK THERE IS
SOMETHING MOVING
IN THE FOLIAGE.
IS IT A WILD
ANIMAL?



PUNDALIK GOT UP
TO INVESTIGATE.



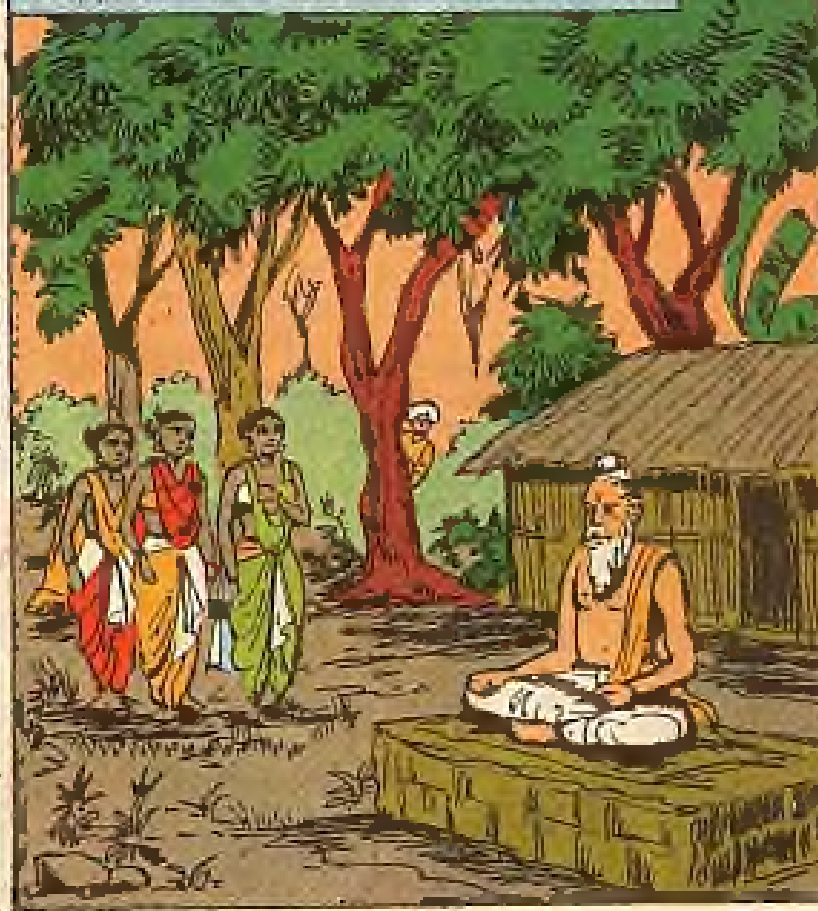
THE SOUND HAD BEEN MADE BY THREE DARK
LADIES MOVING THROUGH THE BUSHES.



PUNDALIK FOLLOWED THEM...



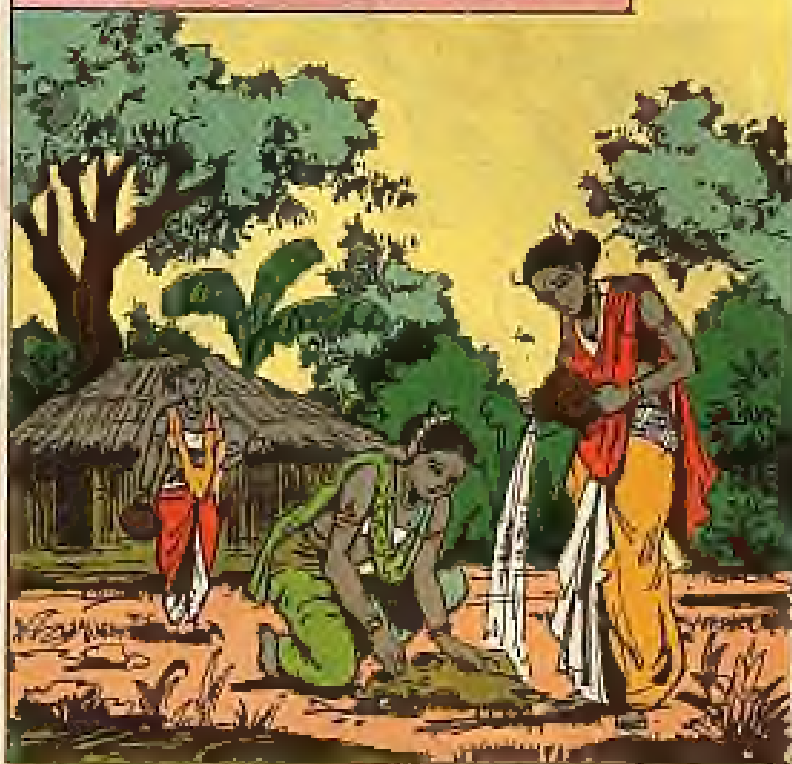
...TILL THEY STEPPED INTO A
LITTLE CLEARING, WHERE SAGE
KUKKUT SAT DEEP IN MEDITATION.



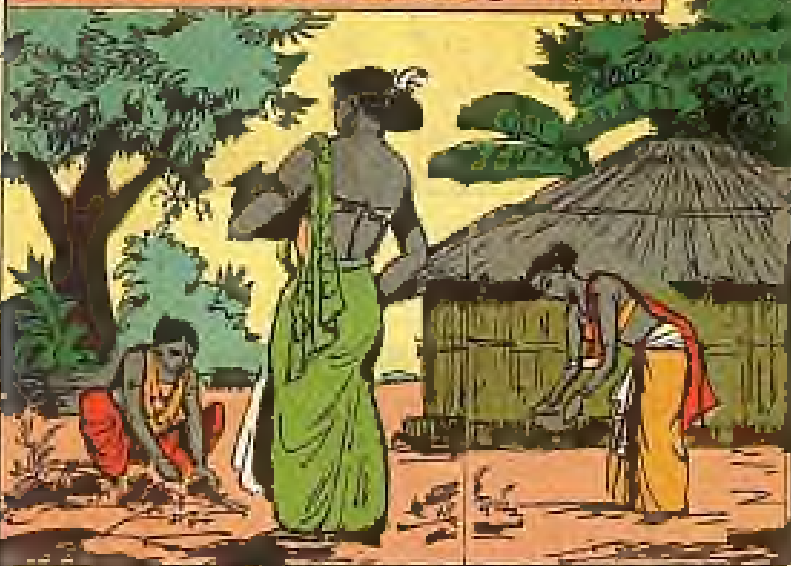
PUNDALIK HID BEHIND A BUSH
AND WATCHED WHILE THEY
SWEEPED THE COURTYARD CLEAN.



THEN THEY SPRINKLED SOME
WATER ON THE GROUND...



...AND SPREAD COWDUNG ON IT.



AS THEY DID SO, A DRASTIC CHANGE
CAME
OVER
THEM.



AND LO! THEY TURNED INTO LADIES,
GLOWING WITH A UNIQUE RADIANCE.





WHEN, HAVING FINISHED THEIR
WORK, THE LADIES BEGAN TO
RETRACE THEIR STEPS

SO, AS THEY CAME
STEPPED FORWARD

STAND IN OUR WAY! YOU
ARE ONE OF THE WORST
SINNERS IN THE WORLD.



PLEASE HAVE MERCY
ON ME. I KNOW I HAVE
SINNED. I AM REPENTANT.
PLEASE TELL ME
WHO YOU ARE.

AM RIVER
GANGA

AM RIVER
YAMUNA

I AM RIVER
SARASWATI



EVERY DAY COUNTLESS
PEGRIMS COME AND
BATHE IN THE WATERS
AND WE BECOME DARK
WITH THE RAINS

EVERY NIGHT WE
COME HERE TO
PURIFY OURSELVES

IF YOU REALLY WANT
TO REFORM, SEEK
THE BLESSINGS OF
LAGE KURAN. HE
WILL GUIDE YOU



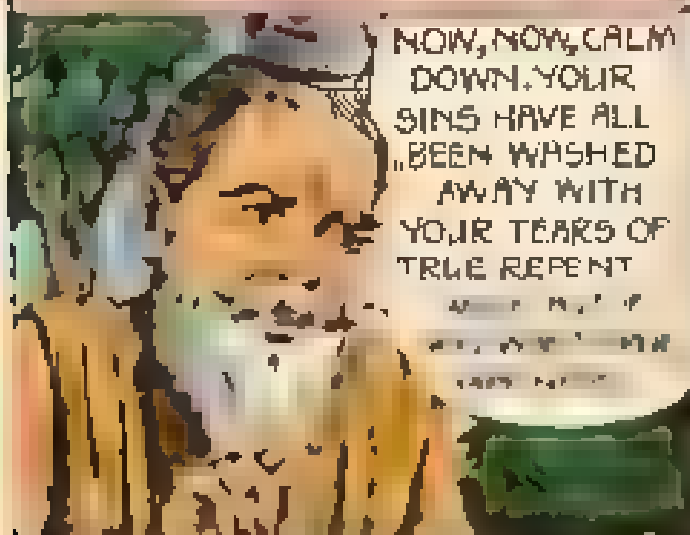
SAT PATIENTLY IN FRONT OF THE SAGE
WHO WAS STILL DEEP IN MEDITATION.



THE SKY, KUKKUT OPENED HIS EYES



PUNDALIK COULD HARDLY SPEAK,
BUT WITH HIS GREAT YOGIC POWERS,
THE SAGE CAME TO KNOW EVERYTHI



JUST FIND YOUR
PARENTS, BEG FOR
THEIR FORGIVENESS
AND SERVE THEM WITH
DEVOTION. THEN
WORSHIP THE LORD.



WHERE WERE

COME ON, WE MUST
FIND MY PARENTS
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

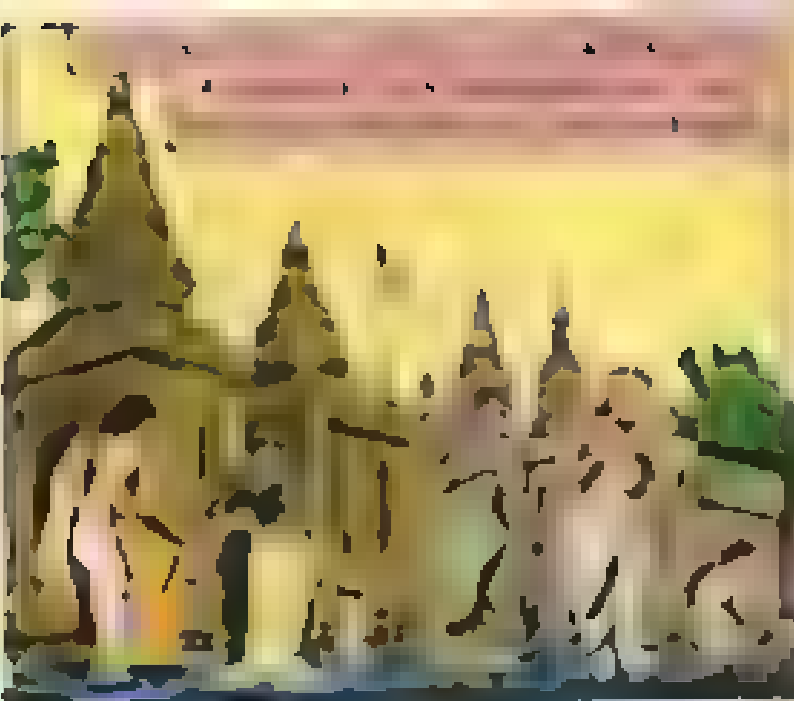


TRACE HIS PAR



GOD BLESS YOU, SON
TODAY YOU HAVE MADE US
TRULY HAPPY, COME, LET
US GO TO KASHI, AND
OFFER OUR PRAYERS THERE.

THEY OFFERED
PRAYERS AT THE
TEMPLE THERE



THEN THEY TRAVELLED
SOUTH TO PANDHARPUR



WHERE PUNDALIK
BUILT A SMALL HUT
FOR THEM TO STAY



HE SERVED HIS PARENTS WITH SIN-
CERE DEVOTION AND RESPECT.



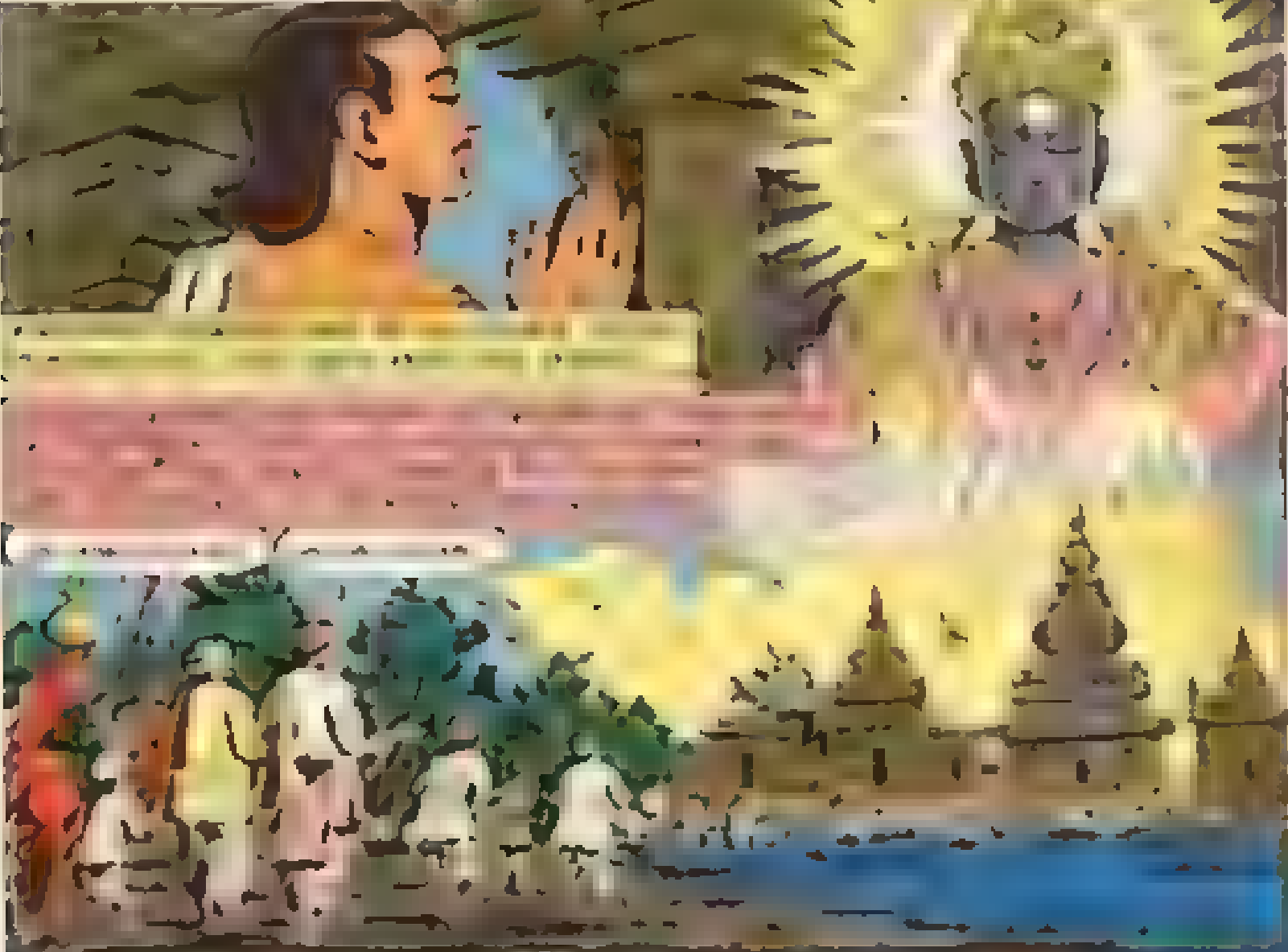
HE READ SOME HOLY BOOKS
AND MEDITATED ON LORD



ONE AFTERNOON, AS PUNDALIK WAS BUSY PRESSING HIS FATHER'S FEET, HE HEARD SOMEONE CALL.



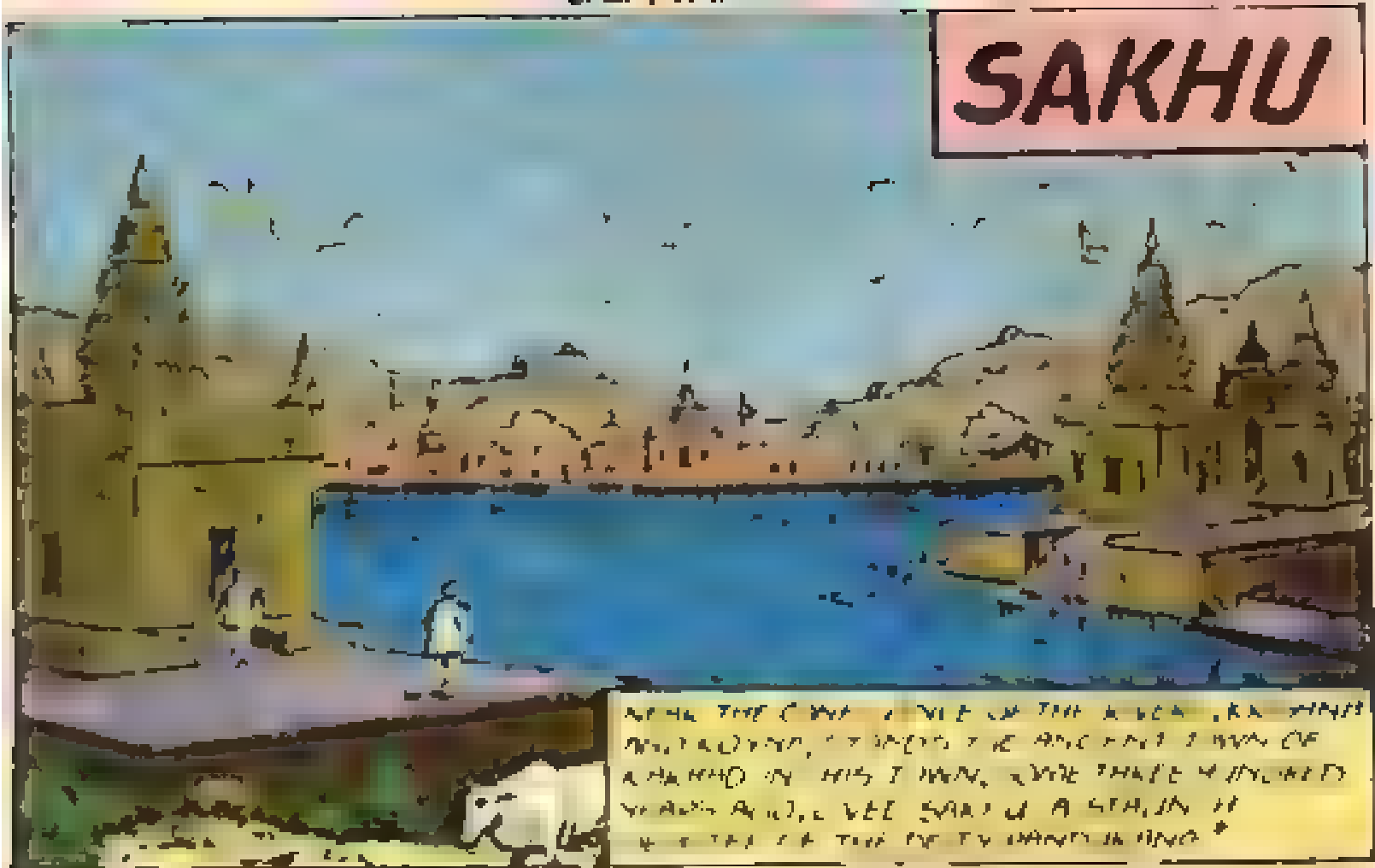
MY LORD. REMAIN STANDING HERE
FOREVER. AND BLESS ALL THOSE
WHO COME TO SEE YOU.



AND ADMIRATION, AS THE MAN WHO
BROUGHT THE LORD TO PANDHARPUR.



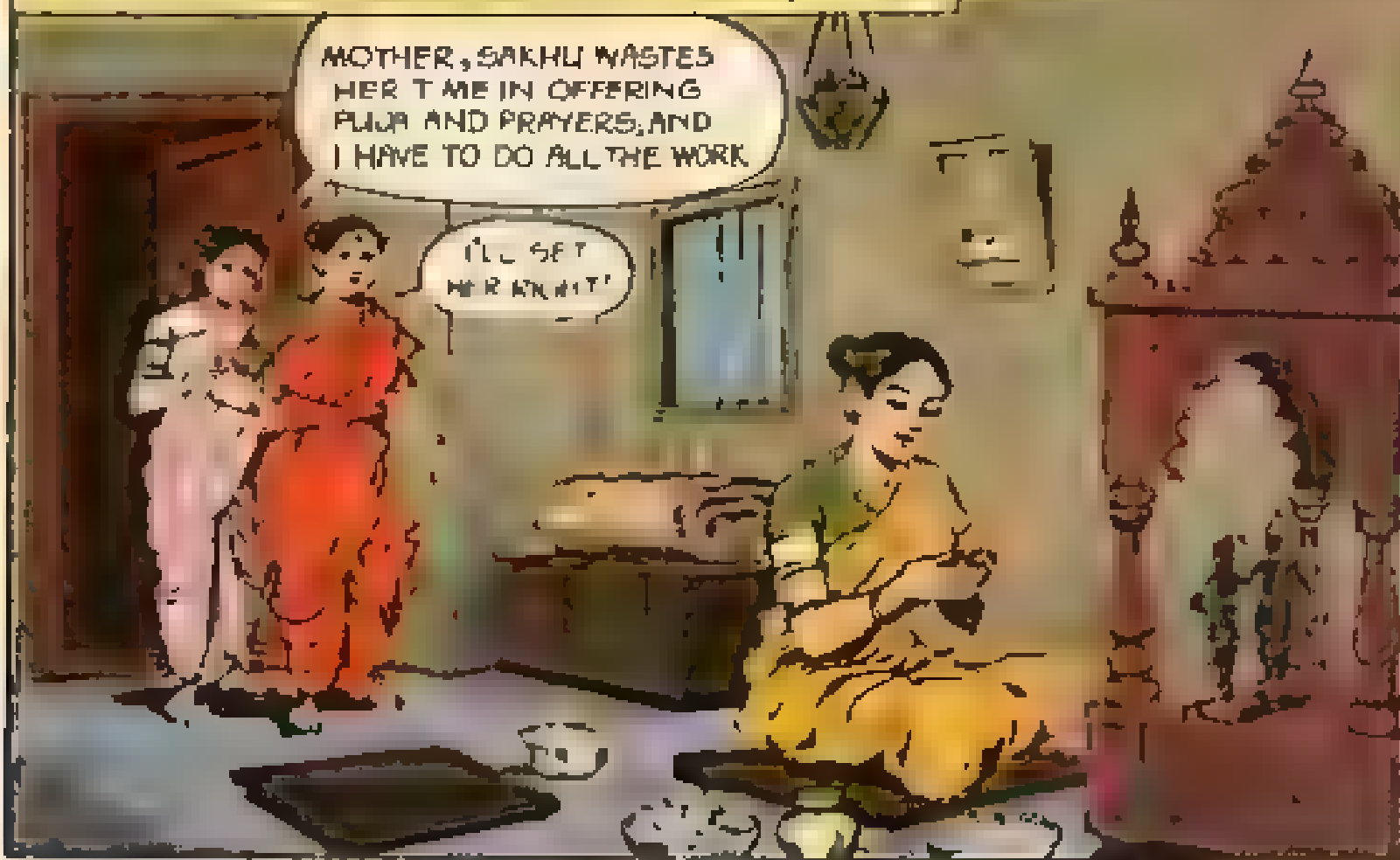
SAKHU



HER SISTER IN-LAW AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW HAVE NO FAITH
IN HER PANDURANG, THOUGH SHE SAT BEFORE HIS IDOL,
ONLY AFTER SHE HAD FINISHED ALL OTHER WORK.

MOTHER, SAKHU WASTES
HER TIME IN OFFERING
PUJA AND PRAYERS, AND
I HAVE TO DO ALL THE WORK.

I'LL GET
HER RIGHT!



YOU FOOL! WHO DO YOU
THINK IS GOING TO
FINISH ALL THE WORK?
IS YOUR PANDURANG
GOING TO COOK
AND CLEAN
FOR YOU?

I WILL THROW HIM
OUT OF THIS
HOUSE, THE
NUISANCE!

MOTHER
PLEASE





* A GROUP OF PILGRIMS, SINGING AND DANCING ON A PILGRIMAGE

AKHLI IS ON HER
WAY TO PANDHARPLA
WITH A DINDI.

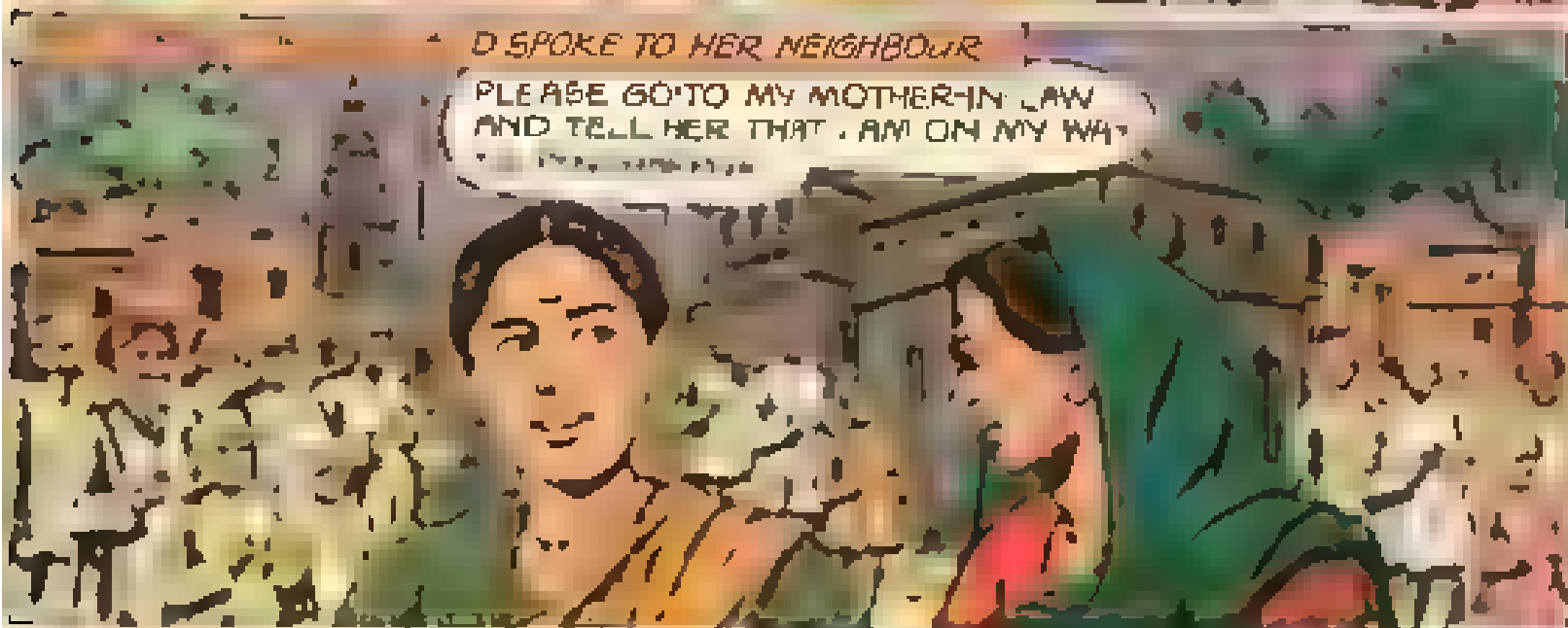
HOW ARE SHE
GETTING MY
PENGASS IN?

WHAT ARE YOU WAIT
ING FOR, YOU WOULD
FOR NOTHING, GO
AND BRING
HER BACK

ENOUGH OF YOUR
PANDHARPLA, YOU
FEEL SHAME IN

IN MY
VITHALI

(POUNCE)



WHEN THEY REACHED HOME

TIE HER TO
THE PILLAR AND
STARVE HER

NOW LET
YOUR
VITHAI
HELP YOU

YOU HAVE ALL
THE TIME TO
WORSHIP HIM NOW

FOR WHY, THEY THINK SHE HAS
NOT HAD ANYTHING TO
EAT AND SHE WILL STARVE

O MY LORD
PANDURANG,
WILL I EVER
REACH YOU?

SUDDENLY

NO MORE I CAN SEE HIM BEFORE MY EYES EVEN NOW!

AS SHE CLOSED HER EYES, SHE SAW PANDURANG AND RUKMINI IN HER

LOVE IF I CAN COME TO YOU WITH CHANCE I'LL BE WITH YOU FULLY

KARHAD

YOUR SON MUST BE FREE FROM MISERABLE

ANY MORE PLEASE RELEASE HER FROM HER FLIGHT

CONSORT, QUESTIONED HIM.
WHAT IS WORRYING
YOU, MY LORD?



MY LORD, I AM
WORRYING ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF
MY KINGDOM.



AT MIDNIGHT, PANDURANG LEFT HIS
AKHU IN KARHAD.



MY LORD, I AM
WORRYING ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF
MY KINGDOM.



GO TO PANDHARPUR.
TILL I SEE YOU
PLACE TILL
THE NEXT DAY.



AM MY FRIEND, CANN OT
THANK YOU ENOUGH!

THIS TIME TO LOOK LIKE SAKHU

(2) AND IN
THE NEXT
A

I WONDER WHO THE GOOD
WOMAN WAS. BECAUSE OF
HER, AT LAST I WILL BE
ABLE TO SEE PANDURANG
WITH MY OWN EYES.

WE HAVE TREATED
YOU BADLY. WILL
YOU FORGIVE US?

AM I NOT
YOUR HALF
COWARD?



DO NOT WISH
TO LIVE ANY
LONGER.



WHY, THIS IS
OUR SAKHU
FROM KARHAD!



THEY WERE ALL THERE FOR THE CREMATION AND LAST RITES
OF THE DEPARTED. THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE SMOKE OF THE
FIRE.

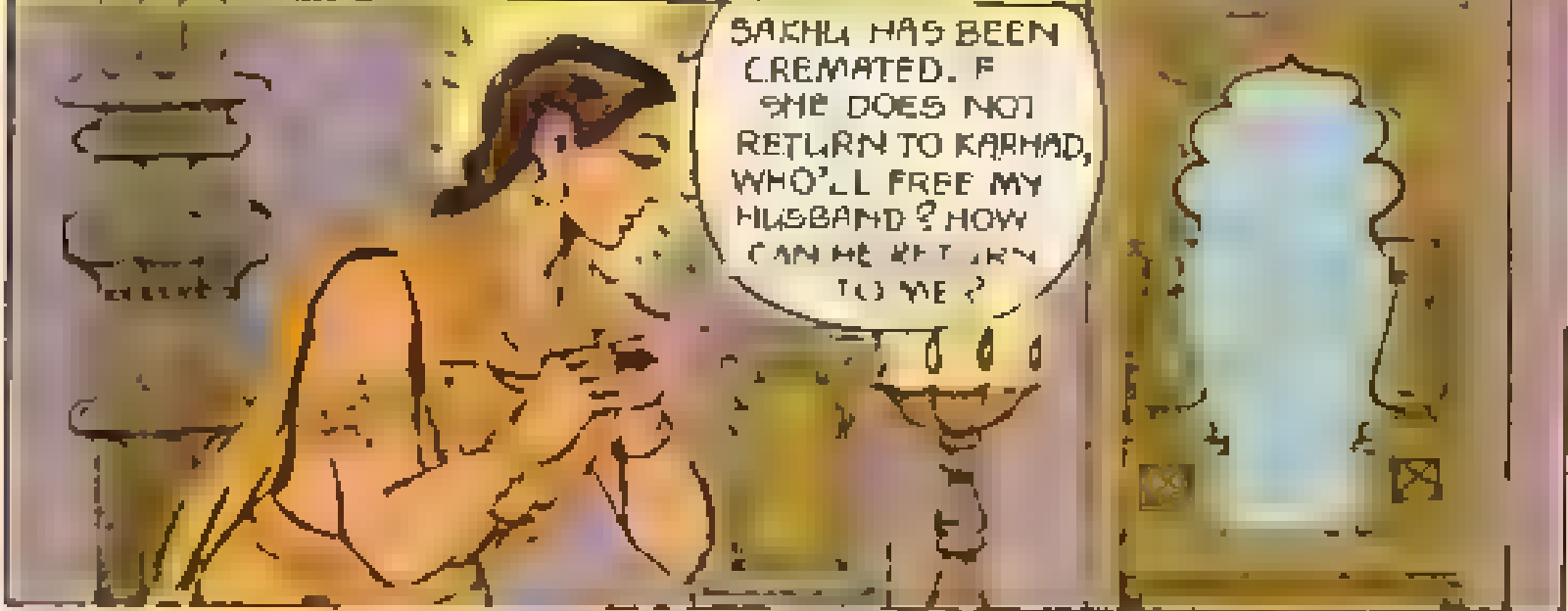
PANDURANG HARI
VAGUDEV HARI!

JA JA. VTHAL!
JA HARI VTHAL!



AN UNWITTING, IN THE DEPTHS OF THE MIND, SHE HAD
A FEELING OF LOSS.

SAKHA HAS BEEN
CREMATED. IF
SHE DOES NOT
RETURN TO KARNAD,
WHO'LL FREE MY
HUSBAND? HOW
CAN HE RETURN
TO ME?

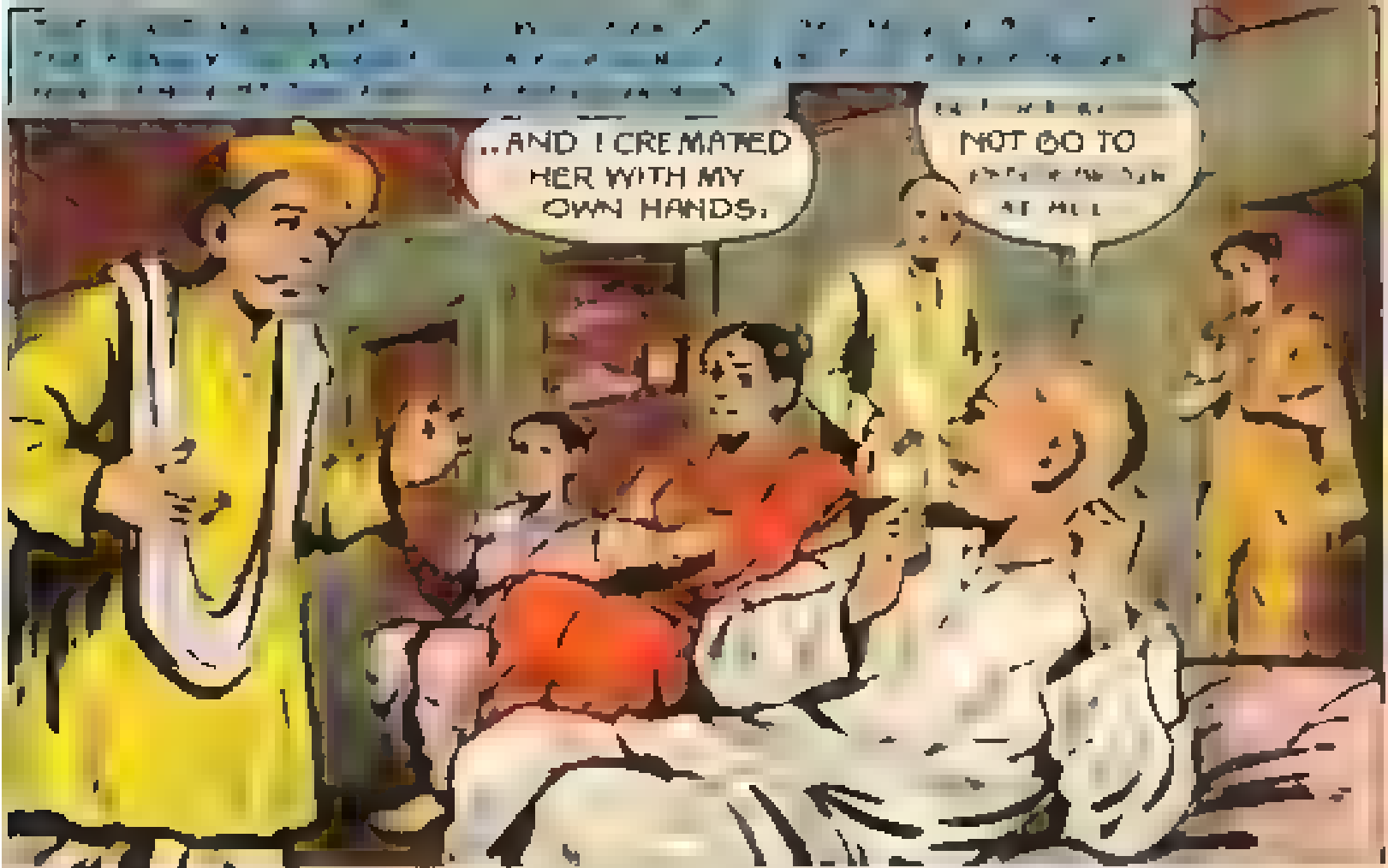


THEY WERE ALL THERE FOR THE CREMATION AND LAST RITES
OF THE DEPARTED. THE AIR WAS FILLED WITH THE SMOKE OF THE
FIRE.

RETURN TO YOUR
PLACE AMONG
YOUR PEOPLE.

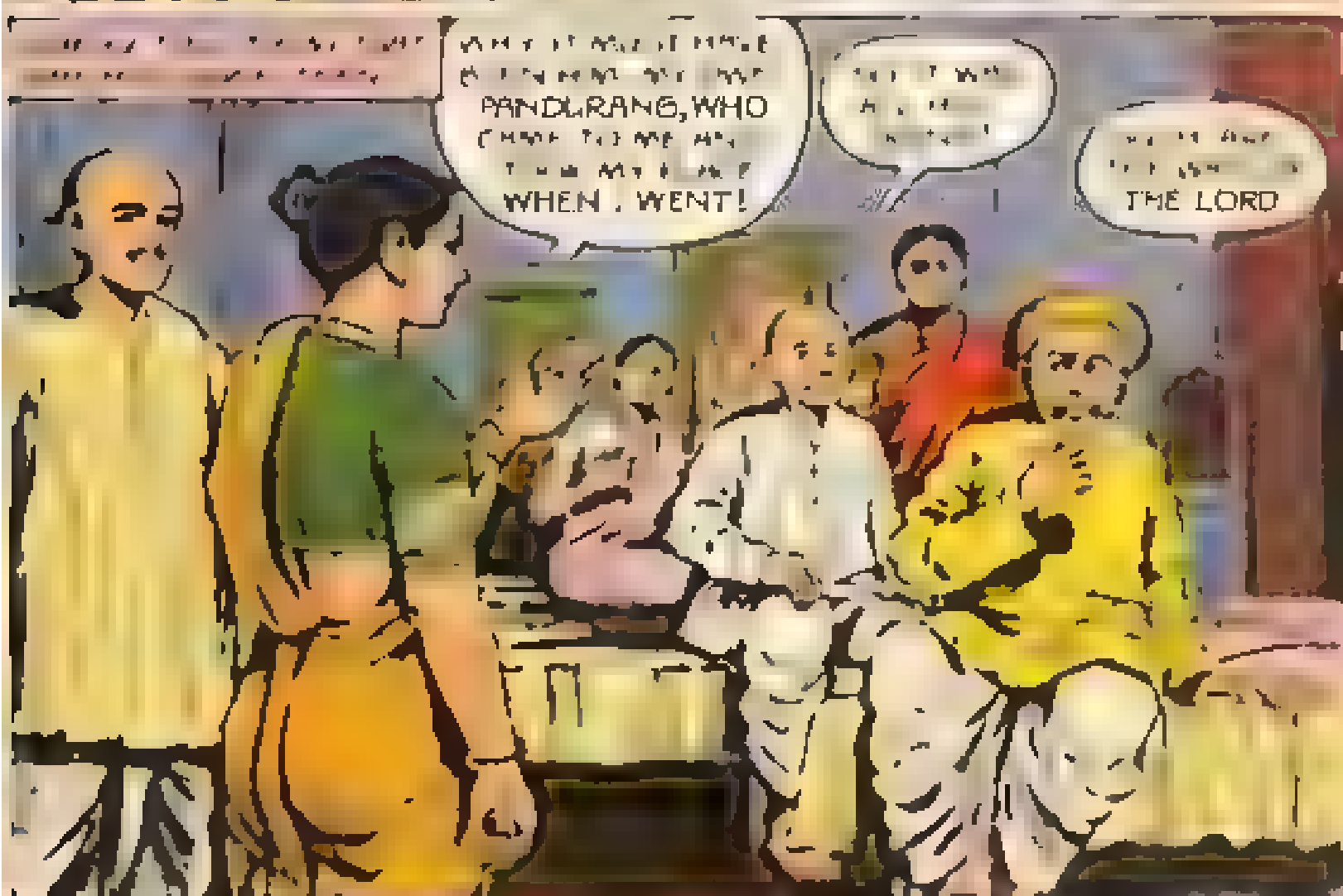






...AND I CREMATED
HER WITH MY
OWN HANDS.

NOT GO TO
ANYWHERE
AT ALL



WHY IT WAS THE
PANDURANG, WHO
CAME TO ME AND
TOLD ME THAT
WHEN I WENT!

HE TOLD ME
A LITTLE
BIT

HE TOLD ME
THE LORD

HOW SHAMEFUL OF
JST ASKED HIM TO
MAKE MY BED



ALAS I ASKED HIM
TO WASH MY FEET
SHAVE ON ME ILL
NOT BE FORGIVEN

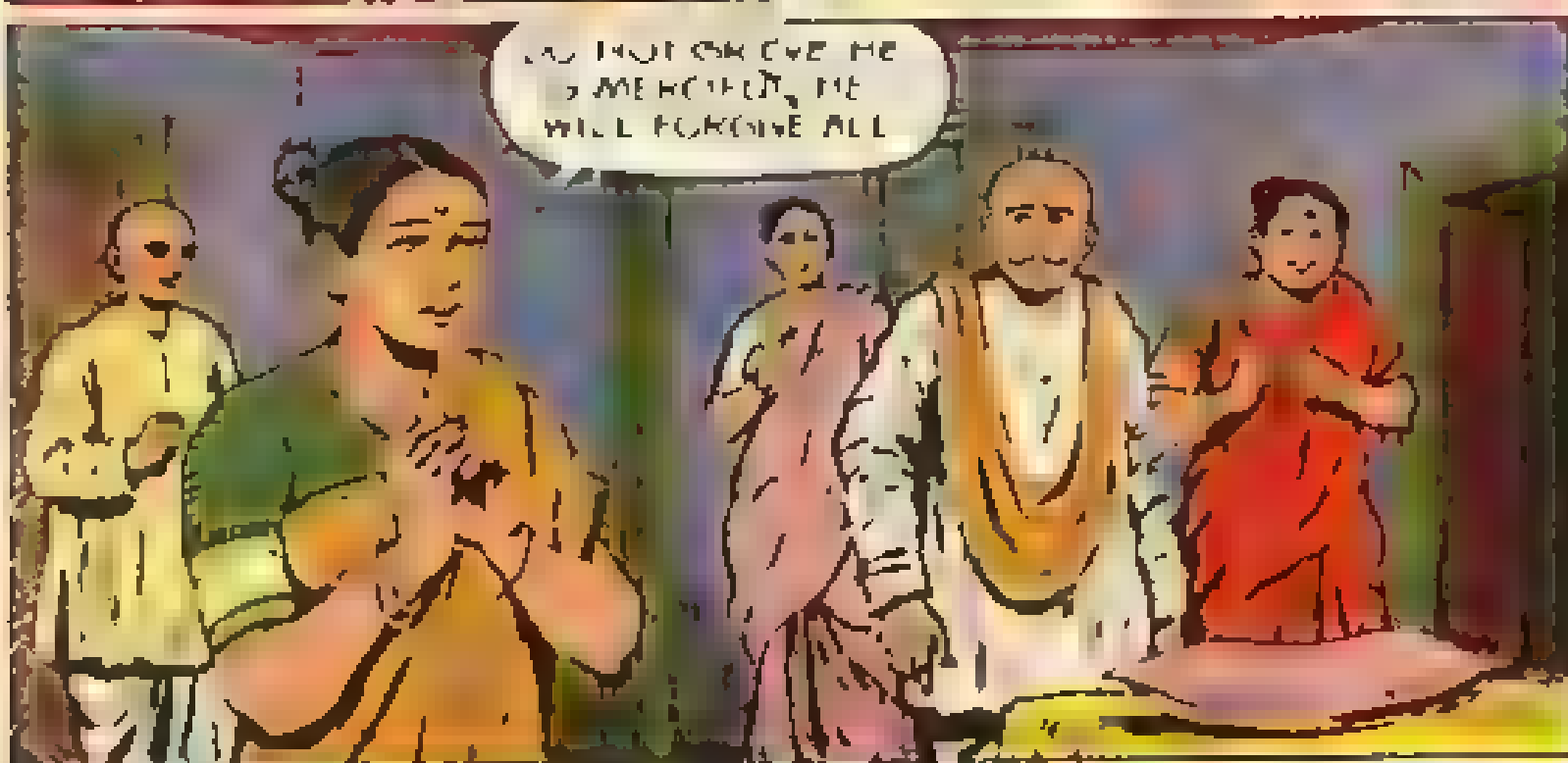


THE FOOL THAT
I WAS I ASKED HIM
TO PREPARE MY BATH

AND I ASKED
HIM TO WASH
MY HAIR



AS HE FORGAVE ME
SOMEHOW, HE
WILL FORGIVE ALL

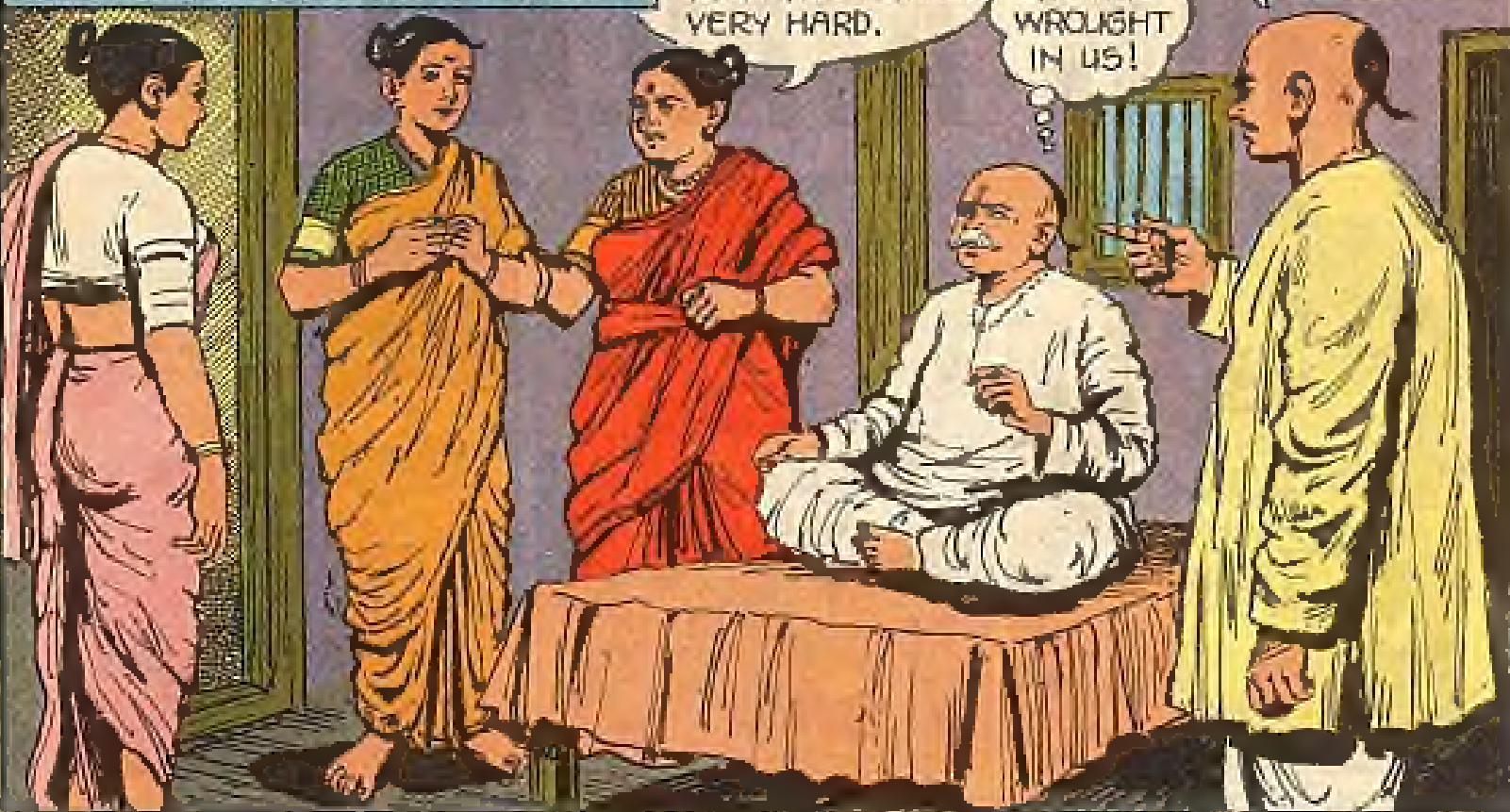


AFTER THAT, SAKHI WAS TREATED VERY RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTION-
ATELY BY HER HUSBAND'S FAMILY.

DAUGHTER, REST
FOR A WHILE.
YOU HAVE WORKED
VERY HARD.

WHAT A
CHANGE
SHE HAS
WROUGHT
IN US!

WE ARE
PROUD OF YOU.

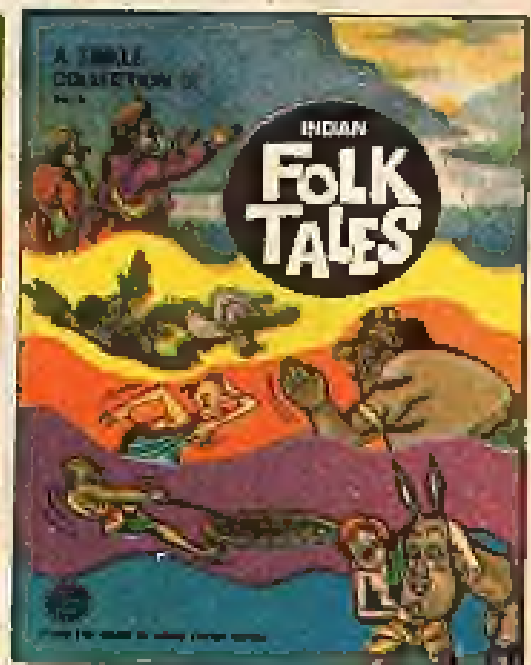
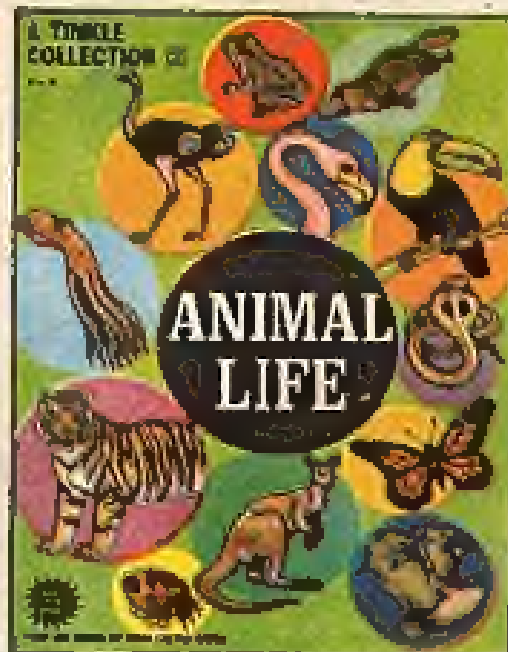
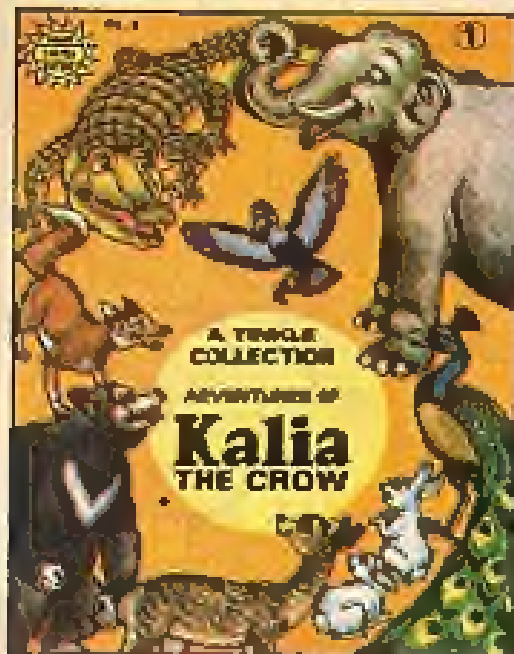


THEY TOO BECAME GREAT DEVOTEES OF PANDURANG
AND OFTEN WENT TO HIS TEMPLE AT PANDHARPUR.

JAI VITHAL, JAI HARI VITHAL.



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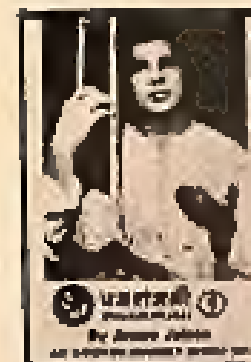
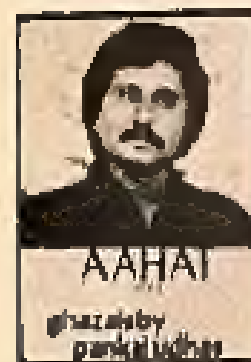


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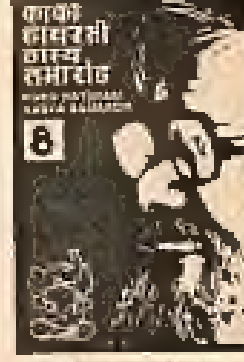


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